

Flint and a regional manager in my Flint/Saginaw/Bay office in the Senate, Connie has been my link to the community. She is a respected community leader in her own right. Through the years, she has mentored interns and staff members, many of whom have caught her zeal for public service and have kept in touch with her long after they left the office.

My staff and I will miss her sense of humor, boundless energy, optimism and enthusiasm, although I am certain that retirement will not stop her from staying involved. I also know that many people in Michigan, whose lives she touched through her work, will miss her.

Upon leaving the Senate, Connie plans to spend time in Florida, where she will be closer to one of her daughters and her three precious grandchildren. She has a love for life that is contagious and I know her family will appreciate having more of her time and attention.

Mr. President, I am sad because I am losing a trusted and valued member of my staff, but I am happy to see a dear friend move on to new challenges, and I wish her the best of everything.

#### RECOGNIZING RICK HUMMEL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor one of our Nation's finest sportswriters, Rick Hummel, and congratulate him on receiving the J.G. Taylor Spink Award, the highest honor awarded by the Baseball Writers Association of America.

The great sportswriter, Red Smith, once said "There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein." He meant, of course, that writing is not easy. Sports writing can be particularly challenging, but when done well it can be some of the best journalistic writing there is. Rick Hummel does it well.

Those who know Hummel best call him the "Commish" a nickname he earned by organizing the newsroom's softball and bowling league teams. Over the years, the moniker has taken on deeper meaning. Today, it serves as a nod to his extensive knowledge of the game of baseball and as a tribute to his venerable career.

Rick Hummel was born and raised in Quincy, IL. He graduated from Quincy High School in 1964, went on to earn a degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism, and then served in the U.S. Army for 3 years.

Hummel joined the staff of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in 1971. At the Post-Dispatch, he learned the ropes, as many sportswriters do, by covering high school athletics. Hummel was given his first chance to write about the World Champion St. Louis Cardinals in 1973. By 1978, covering the Cardinals was Hummel's full-time job. He spent the next 24 years as a beat reporter and continues to write for the Post-Dispatch as a regular columnist.

Hummel is passionate about baseball, but as a writer he is known for his uncomplicated style and humility, as well as his ability to work with players, coaches, and managers alike.

Hummel was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1980 and the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association named him Missouri Sportswriter of the Year on four separate occasions. Now as the 57th winner of the J.G. Taylor Spink Award, presented annually for "meritorious contributions to baseball writing," Hummel will be recognized in a permanent exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame. He joins such legendary sportswriters as Red Smith, Ring Lardner, Grantland Rice, and Damon Runyon.

I congratulate Rick Hummel on this achievement and recognize his accomplishments throughout his long and successful career.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO ERLANGER, KENTUCKY, FIRE DEPARTMENT

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to the city of Erlanger, KY, which is the recipient of the 2006 Award for Municipal Excellence at the National League of Cities' Congress of Cities. This city's Tiered Advanced Life Support System Program for Emergency Medical Services earned Erlanger the Gold Award, which is presented to cities that have a population below 50,000 people. By winning this prestigious award, the Erlanger Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services, EMS, team exhibit the power of hard work as well as their dedication to their community while serving as an example to the rest of the United States.

Since 1989, the goal of the Awards for Municipal Excellence has been to recognize cities that improve the lives of citizens in their communities. These awards identify and feature outstanding city and town programs that show innovation in enhancing the quality of life in America's communities.

The fire department and city of Erlanger recognize the need to have paramedic response and transport capabilities for the safety and welfare of the citizens in its community of 17,000 people. After debating several options, they found a fire service-based EMS delivery model that was affordable and could be enacted immediately. This model provides two cross-trained EMS firefighters on a transport rescue unit, followed by a cross-trained firefighter paramedic in a staff car who can assist and ride in the rescue ambulance with the patient. If the patient does not need advanced life support, the paramedic is ready to respond immediately to the next emergency call. This model delivers the best medical care available and keeps more firefighters on the street to deliver the highest quality fire protection. This joint partnership has made a positive difference in both fire and EMS delivery services in the community of Erlanger.

I congratulate the city of Erlanger, KY, for receiving this Award for Municipal Excellence. By using an innovative approach to address an important community need, they have created this outstanding program. This cut-

ting-edge approach to community emergency response shines as a model for all communities in Kentucky and the United States. This is a true example of Kentucky at its finest and a leadership example to the entire Commonwealth.●

##### TRIBUTE TO JANE BOLIN

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today I honor the life and legacy of Ms. Jane Bolin.

Jane Matilda Bolin of Queens, NY, passed away on Monday, January 8, 2007 after a lifetime of public service. In 1939, Ms. Bolin was the first Black woman to become a judge in the United States, and she continued to serve honorably on the bench for the next 40 years. Her lifelong dedication to social justice, civil rights, and to the betterment of our American society serves as an inspiration to us all.

A trailblazer in so many arenas, Ms. Bolin pursued her goals in the face of widespread discrimination and prejudice. She was the first Black woman to graduate from Yale Law School, the first to join the New York City Bar Association, and the first to work in the city's legal department. In addition to being a fellow Yale Law graduate, she and I also share the same undergraduate alma mater. Ms. Bolin attended Wellesley College in the 1920s as one of only two Black freshmen. She went on to graduate as a Wellesley Scholar, an honor given only to the top 20 students in her class.

Ms. Bolin's tenacity set a powerful example for the women of my generation. In 1958, she commented on the struggle for women's rights that "we have to fight every inch of the way and in the face of sometimes insufferable humiliations." And Ms. Bolin never stopped fighting. She spoke out against segregation in her native Poughkeepsie. She used her position on the bench to end the assignment of probation officers and the placement of children in childcare agencies on the basis of race. As a family court judge, she heard cases ranging from homicides and battered spouses to child support and paternity suits.

Jane Bolin was truly a remarkable woman.

I offer my deepest sympathies to her son, Yorke B. Mizzle, and to all those whose lives she enriched. My thoughts and prayers are with her family during this difficult time.●

##### TRIBUTE TO JOHN AND JILL MAHAN

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to John and Jill Mahan, an exceptional young couple from Kentucky who are the recipients of the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers National Achievement Award. By winning this prestigious award, the Mahans exhibited an unprecedented passion and skill for farming, beating out competition from across the United States.

The American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers National

Achievement Award is presented to young farmers and ranchers across the United States who demonstrate knowledge and achievement in agriculture, as well as a steadfast strength and goal of promoting the agricultural community. With the average age of American farmers increasing steadily as the years go by, it is refreshing to see a young couple like the Mahans embrace the financial and labor-intensive plight that is common in the field of agriculture.

The Mahans own 523 acres of a 2,000-acre farm near their home in Lexington, KY. With the changing needs facing farmers, they quickly learned to diversify their production options and create alternatives for income. Currently, the Mahans produce burley tobacco, beef cattle, wheat, soybeans, corn, and alfalfa. This forward-thinking approach to the ever-changing agriculture market is a clear reason this couple experiences continued success in their farming career.

I congratulate John and Jill Mahan on this prestigious award from the American Farm Bureau. By winning this national award, they have shown the rest of the Nation the strength of the agricultural community in Kentucky along with their personal dedication to their remarkable careers in farming. They are true examples of Kentucky at its finest.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 390. An act to require the establishment of a national database in the National Archives to preserve records of servitude, emancipation, and post-Civil War reconstruction and to provide grants to State and local entities to establish similar local databases.

The message also announced that pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Joint Economic Committee: Mr. SAXTON of New Jersey.

At 2:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 41. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 38) providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON JANUARY 23, 2007—PM 2

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to lie on the table:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Thank you very much. Tonight, I have a high privilege and distinct honor of my own—as the first President to begin the State of the Union message with these words: Madam Speaker.

In his day, the late Congressman Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., from Baltimore, Maryland, saw Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at this rostrum. But nothing could compare with the sight of his only daughter, Nancy, presiding tonight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Congratulations.

Two members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight—and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood.

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

This rite of custom brings us together at a defining hour—when decisions are hard and courage is tested. We enter the year 2007 with large endeavors underway, and others that are ours to begin. In all of this, much is asked of us. We must have the will to face difficult challenges and determined enemies—and the wisdom to face them together.

Some in this Chamber are new to the House and Senate—and I congratulate the Democratic majority. Congress has changed, but our responsibilities have not. Each of us is guided by our own convictions—and to these we must stay faithful. Yet we are all held to the same standards, and called to serve the same good purposes: To extend this Nation's prosperity . . . to spend the people's money wisely . . . to solve problems, not leave them to future generations . . . to guard America against all evil, and to keep faith with those we have sent forth to defend us.

We are not the first to come here with government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences and achieve big things for the American people. Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on—as long as we are willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans, and help them to build a future of hope and opportunity—and this is the business before us tonight.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy—and that is what we have. We are now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth—in a recovery that has created 7.2 million

new jobs . . . so far. Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising. This economy is on the move—and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government but with more enterprise.

Next week, I will deliver a full report on the state of our economy. Tonight, I want to discuss three economic reforms that deserve to be priorities for this Congress.

First, we must balance the Federal budget. We can do so without raising taxes. What we need to do is impose spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009—and met that goal 3 years ahead of schedule. Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the Federal deficit within the next 5 years. I ask you to make the same commitment. Together, we can restrain the spending appetite of the Federal Government, and balance the Federal budget.

Next, there is the matter of earmarks. These special interest items are often slipped into bills at the last hour—when not even C-SPAN is watching. In 2005 alone, the number of earmarks grew to over 13,000 and totaled nearly \$18 billion. Even worse, over 90 percent of earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate—they are dropped into Committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk. You did not vote them into law. I did not sign them into law. Yet they are treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So let us work together to reform the budget process . . . expose every earmark to the light of day and to a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half by the end of this session.

Finally, to keep this economy strong we must take on the challenge of entitlements. Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience—and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet we are failing in that duty—and this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increases, huge deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Everyone in this Chamber knows this to be true—yet somehow we have not found it in ourselves to act. So let us work together and do it now. With enough good sense and good will, you and I can fix Medicare and Medicaid—and save Social Security.

Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools that give children the knowledge and character they need in life. Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act—preserving local control, raising standards in public schools, and holding those schools accountable for results. And because we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.